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PEACOCK

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The Friends of Moorfields Magazine



Inside:
Virtual reality headsets bring patient experiences to life, interview with Director of Digital Development Pete Thomas, and more!



**Friends of
Moorfields
Eye Hospital**

A note from our Chairman

As our 60th anniversary celebrations continue, it is an absolute delight that the Friends of Moorfields are able to host our conference, The Future of Eye Care.

The year has attracted an enormous amount of goodwill for the Friends. Personally I will never tire of the tremendous accolades our volunteers receive for the work they do. Amongst them it was especially pleasing to receive a letter from His Majesty the King sending his “warmest best wishes”.

The outstanding reputation of the Friends is built upon the work of our volunteers. It is their willingness to meet new challenges that has helped build the tremendous trust that now exists between the Friends and Moorfields, without which none of this would work.

It would, of course, be hugely remiss of me to overlook our fabulous staff team who provide the “glue” to ensure



all of this works. They inspire new activities without which we would not have wonderful assets such as the Health Information Hub, providing much-needed information and support for patients, and the recent Volunteer to Career programme which is already showing outstanding results.

It is against this background that the Friends are delighted to host The Future of Eye Care. Moorfields has an exciting future, and the Friends are extremely proud to be playing a small part in that.

Tim Hutchings
Chairman of the
Board of Trustees,
Friends of Moorfields

Chief executive Angela Smith speaks at World Association of Eye Hospitals (WAEH) Annual Meeting



There has been a lot of international interest in both our handholding project and our Volunteer to Career pathway, and we are delighted that Angela was invited to give presentations to both the WAEH Annual Meeting in Melbourne and the UNSW School of Optometry and Visual Science in Sydney.

Following the success of our own projects, Friends have been commissioned by WAEH to create a toolkit for other hospitals to use to develop their own volunteer services and help use volunteers as a stepping stone into a career in healthcare. This will include a Theory of Change, Project Plan, Role Descriptions, and a Volunteer Code of Conduct.

The meeting was attended by chief executives and other executive and senior leaders from eye hospitals throughout the world and was a fantastic opportunity to showcase the work we are doing at Moorfields.

Since you last saw us...

Here's just a small taste of what we've been up to since the last issue of Peacock.

Our shop trolley at Moorfields City Road is back in business for the first time since 2020! Patients waiting for their appointments, or who can't come to the main shop for whatever reason, can take advantage of the trolley's selection of drinks, snacks and magazines.

Thank you to the volunteers who've worked so hard to allow us to provide this service again.



Thanks to the hard work of an intrepid team of volunteers, regular jewellery and art sales are now taking place at Moorfields City Road, with all proceeds donated towards our work.

Join us for upcoming sales on Friday 24 November and Thursday 7 December, in the third floor restaurant, and look out for details of more dates coming soon!



The new Moorfields at Stratford hub is up and running - and so is its volunteer service!

Volunteers at Stratford are already providing meeting and greeting, directions, check-in support and administrative support.

Our handholding service will also soon expand to the new operating theatres on the site.

Huge congratulations to Jan Kuszlewicz, who was awarded Volunteer of the Year at this year's Moorfields Stars awards. Jan volunteers at Moorfields Bedford, doing everything from meeting and greeting to handholding.

Congratulations also to the other finalists, Fahima Iddir and Brenda Marsh, both based at City Road.

We're so proud of you all and grateful for your incredible support!



Virtual reality headsets bring patient experiences to life

The new headsets, funded by a grant from the Friends of Moorfields, are part of a training programme aimed at helping staff to feel more confident supporting visually impaired patients.

Navigating a big hospital can be stressful and confusing at the best of times, but doing it with a visual impairment adds an extra layer of difficulty. A new set of 360-degree videos, designed to be viewed on virtual reality headsets, will help staff and volunteers get a more in-depth understanding of what a visit to Moorfields might look like from a patient's point of view.

The videos explore three different scenarios that patients could encounter – arriving at the hospital and needing

assistance to get to their appointment, going through a safety checklist prior to surgery, and receiving distressing news. Each scenario comes in two versions – one that's an overall positive experience, and another that's more difficult, all depending on how staff interact with the patient.

Plus, special effects on the videos simulate blurred vision – patients might experience this as a permanent part of their sight, it might be gradually worsening as their sight deteriorates,



or they might have just had eyedrops or other treatment that makes it temporarily more difficult to see.

The effects let those taking the training get a small taste of the challenges visually impaired patients might encounter during their appointments, particularly if they're less used to life with low vision. In the future, the team hope the videos can also be adapted to simulate other

eye conditions like age-related macular degeneration or end-stage glaucoma.

Fardowsa Dirir, Clinical Educator and Project Lead, tried out the training for herself. "One of the things that stood out to me was sitting there for 15 minutes and waiting [in the negative version of the arriving at the hospital scenario]. It really moved me because it felt so long. I'm just sitting here and nobody's talking



to me, nobody is approaching me. The training simulates the boredom, frustration and worry – that feeling of, I don't know whether I can go to the toilet, should I stay seated in the waiting area, can I get up and find some food? But you can't move, because you rely on your vision to be aware of your surroundings. That's one experience we want to mimic, because it's something many of

our patients are going through." Many patients will need a bit of support when they arrive at the hospital, but the training also covers how staff can deal compassionately with breaking difficult news, such as a new diagnosis, a worsening prognosis or a need for surgery. "It's about giving them time and space to ask the questions that they need to ask, and also

signpost them to the services or departments that they need if they require further information or support," Fardowsa told us.

While the training is currently in the pilot stage, it will be rolled out across the entire trust early next year. Staff from a variety of teams will have the chance to experience it – not just clinical staff like doctors, nurses and optometrists but also administrative staff, porters, and anyone else who might interact with patients during their visit.

The Friends of Moorfields' own volunteers will also have a chance to do the training. "This is a fantastic learning opportunity for our volunteers, and I'm so pleased that they'll be able to take part in this training," said Volunteer Service Manager Natalia Tomashpolskaya. "Volunteers are often the first people patients meet when they arrive at the hospital, so it's especially important for them to have a good understanding of the kind of support that might be needed."

"It was a real eye-opener," said Connie Reynolds, a Friends of Moorfields volunteer who took part in the pilot. "It helped me to be more aware of the needs of visually impaired patients, and have a better understanding of a patient's perspective. It was really worth doing."

Fardowsa and the team behind the training hope that it will become an integral part of the training staff receive. "Staff have training on supporting visually impaired patients, early on in their induction," Fardowsa explained. "So what tends to happen is staff lose the confidence in caring for somebody with sight impairment, because although a lot of our patients are sight impaired, they are often used to it and very independent. And when you do get that one patient that requires that support, staff aren't always sure how to manage it. And that's what we're hoping to overcome, so that staff have the confidence and the competence to improve patient experience."

Interview with Pete Thomas

We spoke with Pete Thomas, Director of Digital Development and Chief Clinical Information Officer at Moorfields.

Tell us a bit about your background and your role.

The main thing I've done for my professional career is working as a consultant ophthalmologist, specialising in paediatric ophthalmology and strabismus. But I came to medicine as a mature student, and prior to that I spent time working for IBM in research and development, and I have a PhD in computational neuroscience. I made computer models of how the eye and the retina work, so I've always had that dual interest in technology and clinical care.

My main role is Chief Clinical Information Officer and I've recently become Director of

Digital Development, helping ensure that clinical IT systems work really well for clinical pathways, but also looking at how the hospital can use technology to transform clinical care. I also wear a hat with NHS England, as Digital Clinical Lead for Eye Care Transformation.

My work is really about trying to make IT work well for clinical care, and also trying to work out what the digitally enabled clinical care of the future looks like, and hopefully move Moorfields in the right direction on that.

What's the best thing about your role?

The thing that's most fun is the innovation-related work. What

I particularly enjoy is when we find an idea within Moorfields that comes from something we've seen or some feedback we've got.

The solution I'm demonstrating at The Future of Eye Care is something called Explain Health, which came from a conversation between clinicians looking at feedback from patients that they often didn't

understand what was in their letters. So we've developed an application that allows you to take a photo of your letter and then have it explained to you and automatically get linked to lots of useful electronic resources. At the moment it's just a prototype, but it works very, very well.

Another recent successful project came from Roxanne Crosby-Nwaobi, our Head of Clinical Research Nursing. She asked for the Department of Digital Medicine's support with



a pitch to the Nursing Times Digital Innovation Competition. We helped develop her idea of an application that reminds patients to take care to take their medications, particularly on complex regimes. And we put together a very strong pitch with her, which she presented extremely well and won that competition.

So the stuff I really enjoy is when we get an idea internally at Moorfields and we can help something to happen. I'd like to do an awful lot more of that over the next few years.

What are the biggest challenges for yourself and your team at the moment?

It's a challenging environment right now. There are huge pressures on the NHS, there's not necessarily as much funding as we might like, and digitally transforming the hospital is a huge undertaking. And to do that at the same time as you're keeping standard services running is not easy.

For instance, at the moment we're working on moving to a new system for handling electronic patient records. That's a very complex project and it's very expensive. We are in a position to do things really differently with digital, but there's a huge amount of building work to get Moorfields ready to use all those clever technologies.

How do you see the Friends of Moorfields supporting you and your team in the future?

The volunteers and the Health Information Hub are potentially really important for us, because as we launch these services for digitally enabled care, we also have to take into account digitally excluded patients. It's a double-edged sword because while there are patients who can't attend a video consultation who would like to, I also see the flip side of it – lots of patients attending video consultations who tell me that they're only able to attend because it's by video – maybe they're self-employed and they couldn't cope with a loss of earnings for taking a day off, or maybe travel is difficult for them.

So there are two sides to it, but there is going to be a huge amount of work to do around making sure everyone can access these new technologies. In the same way volunteers or the Hub might support a patient during the visit to a physical hospital, there's a different set of support needs around accessing a digital hospital that the Friends can help with.

Get ready for Christmas!



New Christmas card designs in stock now, at the Friends Shop at Moorfields City Road and online.

Pop in, or visit:

friends-of-moorfields.myshopify.com

Our £60 for 60 years anniversary challenge is finishing strong with help from these intrepid supporters!

Our wonderful Fundraising and Business Development Manager Fleur raised £60 for us with a cocktail party fundraiser to celebrate her birthday!



A big thank you to Sandra and her grandson Samuel, who fundraised for us recently by baking delicious cakes to sell in their local community.

Sandra also sold her cakes at a separate coffee morning earlier in the summer, and between both events the pair raised £265!



Supporter Sandra, who has been a Moorfields patient for over 60 years, raised a fantastic £325 for us with a sponsored walk this summer.

Sandra's walk started on Egham Hill and looped past the Kennedy Memorial and the Thames, taking in some beautiful scenery on the way!

Thank you so much, Sandra!



Congratulations to Health Play Specialist Gemma, who ran the Big Half to raise money for the Friends to provide new iPads with accessibility features for the Richard Desmond Children's Eye Centre.

The new iPads will help distract anxious children awaiting surgery, prepare them for what to expect and support them to communicate their needs and wishes.

Gemma and her guide runner and cousin Chloe completed the race in 2 hours and 27 minutes, raising an incredible £3635!

Thank you to Moorfields Eye Charity who generously contribute towards the funding of our Volunteer Service.



Moorfields Eye Charity



Registered Charity 1161546

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